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UNDER THE ACORNS.

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COMING along a woodland lane, a small round and glittering object in the brushwood caught my attention. The ground was but just hidden in that part of the wood with a thin growth of brambles, low, and more like creepers than anything else. These scarcely hid the surface, which was brown with the remnants of oak-leaves; there seemed so little cover, indeed, that a mouse might have been seen. But at that spot some great spurge-plants hung this way and that, leaning aside, as if the stems were too weak to uphold the heads of dark-green leaves. Thin grasses, perfectly white, bleached by sun and dew, stood in a bunch by the spurge; their seeds had fallen, the last dregs of sap had dried within them, there was nothing left but the bare stalks. A creeper of bramble fenced round one side of the spurge and white grass bunch, and brown leaves were visible on the surface of the ground through the interstices of the spray. It was in the midst of this little thicket that a small, dark, and glittering object caught my attention. I knew it was the eye of some creature at once, but, supposing it nothing more than a young rabbit, was passing on, thinking of other matters, when it occurred to me, before I could finish the step I had taken, so quick is thought, that the eye was not large enough to be that of a rabbit. I stopped; the black glittering eye had gone—the creature had lowered its neck, but immediately noticing that I was looking in that direction, it cautiously raised itself a little, and I saw at once that the eye was the eye of a bird. This I knew first by its size, and next by its position in relation to the head, which was invisible—for had it been a rabbit or hare, its ears would have projected. The moment after, the eye itself confirmed this—the nictitating membrane was rapidly drawn over it, and as rapidly removed. This membrane is the distinguishing mark of a bird's eye. But what bird? Although I was within

two yards, I could not even see its head, nothing but the black glittering eyeball, on which the light of the sun glinted. The sunbeams came over my shoulder straight into the bird's face.

Without moving—which I did not wish to do, as it would disturb the bird—I could not see its plumage; the bramble spray in front, the spurge behind, and the bleached grasses at the side, perfectly concealed it. Only two birds I considered would be likely to squat and remain quiescent like this—partridge or pheasant; but I could not contrive to view the least portion of the neck. A moment afterwards the eye came up again, and the bird slightly moved its head, when I saw its beak, and knew it was a pheasant immediately. I then stepped forward—almost on the bird—and a young pheasant rose, and flew between the tree-trunks to a deep dry watercourse, where it disappeared under some withering, yellow ferns.

Of course I could easily have solved the problem long before, merely by startling the bird; but what would have been the pleasure of that? Any plough-lad could have forced the bird to rise, and would have recognised it as a pheasant; to me, the pleasure consisted in discovering it under every difficulty. That was woodcraft; to kick the bird up would have been simply nothing at all. Now I found why I could not see the pheasant's neck or body; it was not really concealed, but shaded out by the mingled hues of the white grasses, the brown leaves of the surface, and the general gray-brown tints. Now it was gone, there was a vacant space—its plumage had filled up that vacant space with hues so similar, that at no farther distance than two yards, I did not recognise it by colour. Had the bird fully carried out its instinct of concealment, and kept its head down as well as its body, I should have passed it. Nor should I have seen its head if it had looked the other way; the eye betrayed its presence. The dark glittering eye, which the sunlight touched, caught my attention instantly. There is nothing like an eye in inanimate nature; no flower, no speck on a bough,

no gleaming stone wet with dew, nothing, indeed, to which it can be compared. The eye betrayed it; I could not overlook an eye. Neither nature nor inherited experience had taught the pheasant to hide its eye; the bird not only wished to conceal itself, but to watch my motions, and looking up from its cover, was immediately observed.

At a turn of the lane there was a great heap of oak 'chumps,' crooked logs, sawn in lengths, and piled together. They were so crooked, it was difficult to find a seat, till I hit on one larger than the rest. The pile of 'chunks' rose half-way up the stem of an oak-tree, and formed a wall of wood at my back; the oak-boughs reached over and made a pleasant shade. The sun was warm enough to render resting in the open air delicious, the wind cool enough to prevent the heat becoming too great; the pile of timber kept off the draught, so that I could stay and listen to the gentle 'hush, hush' of the breeze in the oak above me; 'hush' as it came slowly, 'hush' as it came fast, and a low undertone as it nearly ceased. So thick were the haws on a bush of thorn opposite, that they tinted the hedge, a red colour among the yellowing hawthorn leaves. To this red hue the blackberries that were not ripe, the thick dry red sorrel stalks, a bright canker on a brier, almost as bright as a rose, added their colours. Already the foliage of the bushes had been thinned, and it was possible to see through the upper parts of the boughs. The sunlight, therefore, not only touched their outer surfaces, but passed through and lit up the branches within, and the wild-fruit upon them. Though the sky was clear and blue between the clouds, that is, without mist or haze, the sunbeams were coloured the faintest yellow, as they always are on a ripe autumn day. This yellow shone back from grass and leaves, from bough and tree-trunk, and seemed to stain the ground. It is very pleasant to the eyes, a soft, delicate light, that gives another beauty to the atmosphere. Some roan cows were wandering down the lane, feeding on the herbage at the side; their colour, too, was lit up by the peculiar light, which gave a singular softness to the large shadows of the trees upon the sward. In a meadow by the wood the oaks cast broad shadows on the short velvety sward, not so sharp and definite as those of summer, but tender, and as it were drawn with a loving hand. They were large shadows, though it was mid-day—a sign that the sun was no longer at his greatest height, but declining; in July, they would scarcely have extended beyond the rim of the boughs; the rays would have dropped perpendicularly, now they slanted. Pleasant as it was, there was regret in the thought that the summer was going fast. Another sign—the grass by the gateway, an acre of it, was brightly yellow with hawkweeds, and under these were the last faded brown heads of meadow clover; the brown, the bright yellow disks, the green grass, the tinted sunlight falling upon it, caused a wavering colour that fleeted before the glance.

All things brown, and yellow, and red, are brought out by the autumn sun; the brown furrows freshly turned where the stubble was yesterday, the brown bark of trees, the brown fallen leaves, the brown stalks of plants; the

red haws, the red unripe blackberries, red bryony berries, reddish-yellow fungus; yellow hawkweed, yellow ragwort, yellow hazel leaves, elms, spots in lime or beech; not a speck of yellow, red, or brown, the yellow sunlight does not find out. And these make autumn, with the caw of rooks, the peculiar autumn caw of laziness and full feeding, the sky blue as March between the great masses of dry cloud floating over, the mist in the distant valleys, the tinkle of traces as the plough turns, and the silence of the woodland birds. The lark calls as he rises from the earth, the swallows still wheeling call as they go over, but the woodland birds are mostly still, and the restless sparrows gone forth in a cloud to the stubble. Dry clouds, because they evidently contain no moisture that will fall as rain here; thick mists, condensed haze only, floating on before the wind. The oaks were not yet yellow, their leaves were half green, half brown; Time had begun to invade them, but had not yet indented his full mark.

Of the year there are two most pleasurable seasons: the spring, when the oak-leaves come russet brown on the great oaks; the autumn, when the oak-leaves begin to turn. At the one, I enjoy the summer that is coming; at the other, the summer that is going. At either, there is a freshness in the atmosphere, a colour everywhere, a depth of blue in the sky, a welcome in the woods. The redwings had not yet come; the acorns were full, but still green; the greedy rooks longed to see them riper. They were very numerous, the oaks covered with them, a crop for the greedy rooks, the greedier pigeons, the pheasants, and the jays.

One thing I missed—the corn. So quickly was the harvest gathered, that those who delight in the colour of the wheat had no time to enjoy it. If any painter had been looking forward to August to enable him to paint the corn, he must have been disappointed. There was no time; the sun came, saw, and conquered, and the sheaves were swept from the field. Before yet the reapers had entered one field of ripe wheat, I did indeed for a brief evening obtain a glimpse of the richness and still beauty of an English harvest. The sun was down, and in the west, a pearly gray light spread widely, with a little scarlet drawn along its lower border. Heavy shadows hung in the foliage of the elms; the clover had closed, and the quiet moths had taken the place of the humming bees. Southwards, the full moon, a red-yellow disk, shone over the wheat, which appeared the finest pale amber. A quiver of colour—an undulation—seemed to stay in the air, left from the heated day; the sunset hues and those of the red-tinted moon fell as it were into the remnant of day, and filled the wheat; they were poured into it, so that it grew in their colours. Still heavier the shadows deepened in the elms; all was silence, save for the sound of the reapers on the other side of the hedge, 'slash—rustle,' 'slash—rustle,' and the drowsy night came down as softly as an eyelid.

While I sat on the log under the oak, every now and then wasps came to the crooked pieces of sawn timber, which had been barked. They did not appear to be biting it—they can easily snap off fragments of the hardest oak—they merely alighted and examined it, and went on again.

Looking at them, I did not notice the lane till something moved, and two young pheasants ran by along the middle of the track and into the cover at the side. The grass at the edge which they pushed through closed behind them, and feeble as it was—grass only—it shut off the interior of the cover as firmly as iron bars. The pheasant is a strong lock upon the woods; like one of Chubb's patent locks, he closes the woods as firmly as an iron safe can be shut. Wherever the pheasant is artificially reared, and a great 'head' kept up for battue-shooting, there the woods are sealed. No matter if the wanderer approach with the most harmless of intentions, it is exactly the same as if he were a species of burglar. The botanist, the painter, the student of nature, all are met with the high-barred gate and the threat of law. Of course, the pheasant-lock can be opened by the silver key; still, there is the fact, that since pheasants have been bred on so large a scale, half the beautiful woodlands of England have been fastened up. Where there is no artificial rearing there is much more freedom; those who love the forest can roam at their pleasure, for it is not the fear of damage that locks the gate, but the pheasant. In every sense, the so-called sport of battue-shooting is injurious—injurious to the sportsman, to the poorer class, to the community. Every true sportsman should discourage it, and indeed does. I was talking with a thorough sportsman recently, who told me, to my delight, that he never reared birds by hand; yet he had a fair supply, and could always give a good day's sport, judged as any reasonable man would judge sport. Nothing must enter the domains of the hand-reared pheasant; even the nightingale is not safe. A naturalist has recorded that in a district he visited, the nightingales were always shot by the keepers and their eggs smashed, because the singing of these birds at night disturbed the repose of the pheasants! They also always stepped on the eggs of the fern-owl, which are laid on the ground, and shot the bird if they saw it, for the same reason, as it makes a jarring sound at dusk. The fern-owl or goatsucker is one of the most harmless of birds—a sort of evening swallow—living on moths, chafer, and similar night-flying insects. Thus the man in velveteens plays 'fantastic tricks' before high heaven!

Continuing my walk, still under the oaks and green acorns, I wondered why I did not meet any one. There was a man cutting fern in the wood—a labourer—and another cutting up thistles in a field; but with the exception of men actually employed and paid, I did not meet a single person, though the lane I was following is close to several well-to-do places. I call that a well-to-do place where there are hundreds of large villas inhabited by wealthy people. It is true that the great majority of persons have to attend to business, even if they enjoy a good income; still, making every allowance for such a necessity, it is singular how few, how very few, seem to appreciate the quiet beauty of this lovely country. Somehow, they do not seem to see it—to look over it; there is no excitement in it, for one thing. They can see a great deal in Paris, but nothing in an English meadow. I have often wondered at the rarity of meeting any one in the fields, and yet—curious anomaly—if you point

out anything, or describe it, the interest exhibited is marked. Every one takes an interest, but no one goes to see for himself. For instance, since the natural history collection was removed from the British Museum to a separate building at South Kensington, it is stated that the visitors to the Museum have fallen from an average of twenty-five hundred a day to one thousand; the inference is, that out of every twenty-five, fifteen came to see the natural history cases. Indeed, it is difficult to find a person who does not take an interest in some department of natural history, and yet I scarcely ever meet any one in the fields. You may meet many in the autumn far away in places famous for scenery, but almost none in the meadows at home. On the other hand, if the labouring classes have a holiday, they immediately go out into the country.

I stayed by a large pond to look at the shadows of the trees on the green surface of duckweed. The soft green of the smooth weed received the shadows as if specially prepared to show them to advantage. The more the tree was divided—the more interlaced its branches and less laden with foliage, the more it 'came out' on the green surface; each slender twig was reproduced, and sometimes even the leaves. From an oak, brown, and from a lime, orange leaves had fallen, and remained on the green weed; the flags by the shore were turning brown; a tint of yellow was creeping up the rushes and the great trunk of a fir shone reddish brown in the sunlight. There was colour even about the still pool, where the weeds grew so thickly that the moorhens could scarcely swim through them. In a recent paper in *Chambers's Journal* (No. 25) I mentioned some of the points of interest that might be found about roofs. Since then, a correspondent has told me that in Wales he found a cottage perfectly roofed with fern—it grew so thickly as to conceal the roof. Had a painter put this in a picture, many would have exclaimed: 'How fanciful! He must have made it up; it could never have grown like that!' Not long after receiving my correspondent's kind letter, I chanced to find a roof near London upon which the same fern was growing in lines along the tiles. It grew plentifully, but was not in so flourishing a condition as that found in Wales. Painters are sometimes accused of calling upon their imagination when they are really depicting fact, for the ways of nature vary very much in different localities, and that which may seem impossible in one place is common enough in another.

BY MEAD AND STREAM.

CHAPTER LIL.—HOW IT WAS DONE.

COUTTS was for an instant dumb with surprise and chagrin. That smart stroke of business on which he had been priding himself was completely spoiled, and all possibility of ingratiating himself with Mr Shield was at an end.

When the bill was produced by Coutts, Wrentham had become white, and his lips, dry and feverish, closed tightly. When the signatures were calmly acknowledged by Philip and Shield, he gazed at them with a bewildered expression,

then grasped the back of a chair and pretended to be looking through the window at something opposite. Sergeant Dier gave a slight jerk of his body as if lifting his heel from the floor. He darted a suspicious glance at his employer and at Wrentham. Then he turned to Tuppit and gazed at him with a bland admiring smile. Shield, Beecham, Philip, and Tuppit were unmoved.

Coutts took the bill from Tuppit, and after deliberate examination replaced it in his pocket-book.

'I am delighted to find that it is all right, and that it will be duly honoured,' he said; but cool as he was, the acrimony of his tone contradicted the words. 'The fact that it is so takes me out of a very awkward corner. I must say, however, Mr Shield, that you would have saved yourself and me a great deal of unnecessary trouble and waste of time if you had told me when I first came that the thing was correct.'

'Have a lot of things on my mind. Forget sometimes,' Shield jerked out carelessly.

'Ah, it's a misfortune to have a bad memory in business. I trust you will not forget to do justice to the motives which brought me to you.'

'Oh, I'll do your motives full justice,' answered Shield with a grunt which would have developed into a coarse guffaw but for a strong effort of self-restraint.

Coutts felt this indignity, although he did not feel the contemptible position in which he was placed, because he still believed that he had perfectly concealed the ulterior objects he had in bringing the supposed forgery directly under Shield's notice.

'That is all I ask, and I may say good-morning. I hope our next meeting will be on more agreeable business.—Good-day, Phil. I thought you had got yourself into a particularly nasty mess, and was doing my best to save you from the consequences.'

'Thank you,' said Philip, but there was none of his usual cordiality in voice or look.

'Well, there has been a mistake—somewhere. I suppose it must be put down to me. However, we can afford to let it drop now.'

'Best thing you can do,' growled Shield.

Coutts paid no attention to the remark.

'You'll find bad news when you get to your chambers, Phil. There was a bonfire at Ringsford last night, and the guv'nor has got hurt.'

Philip was prevented from questioning him by Mr Shield.

'A word in your wise ear before you go, Mr Coutts Hadleigh. I promised that your motives in coming to me should have justice done them. They shall. I know what they were. You have been useful to us, and that will be taken into account.'

'It is a satisfaction to have served you in any way,' rejoined Coutts, unabashed, although he

understood the meaning of that parting address, and knew that somehow he had overreached himself, which was even more disagreeable than being overreached by others.

He left the room with as much composure as if he had satisfactorily completed an ordinary piece of business.

Sergeant Dier gave a cheery 'Good-day, gentlemen—come along, Mr Tuppit,' as he went out. Tuppit had continued to edge his way round the table to where Wrentham stood, and slipped a scrap of paper into his hand. He bowed as if taking leave of an audience, and followed the detective.

A hansom was already at the door, and Coutts was about to get into it; before doing so he spoke with injudicious abruptness to his agent.

'Arrange with your friend about his expenses, and call at the office to-morrow at eleven.'

'Then I am to consider the job finished?'

'Yes, of course.'

'Glad of it,' said Dier, smiling to himself as the cab wheeled away. 'Come along, Bob, there's something I want you to show me, and we must have a refreshment.'

As they were about to move away, a servant informed Dier that he was wanted by a gentleman inside, and he was taken back to Mr Beecham. From him he received instructions which appeared to give him much satisfaction.

'Come along, Bob,' he said on rejoining that personage; 'I am put on to a decent sort of thing this time. Off with one thing, on with another—that's the way to do it, my boy.'

He lit a cigar, and linking his arm in that of his companion, he led the way to a small tavern situated in a by-street in convenient proximity to the mews. Although the bar was crowded with coachmen and ostlers, the tap-room was at this time of day little frequented, and at present was unoccupied.

'Ah, this is cosy,' said Dier, seating himself with his back to the window. 'Now we can have a rest and a chat. Won't you smoke?'

He gave Tuppit a cigar, ordered sherry for himself, and beer 'in the pewter' for his companion. The little conjurer drank as if he had been parched with thirst. Then he smoked and presently began to feel comfortable. Dier, meanwhile, entertained him with various amusing professional experiences; ordered more beer, and Bob felt more comfortable. When the sergeant saw him at ease, he approached the subject in which he was interested.

'I was forgetting that trick I wanted you to explain to me, Tuppit. When I saw it done, it fairly puzzled me, and you know I am up to a few tricks of your trade.'

'You'd have been a first-rate hand if you had only taken to it. But what was it puzzled you?'

'Well, the fellow who was doing it was handed a card, as it might be. He looked at it—gave it back to us, and it wasn't the same.'

'One of the easiest tricks in the whole art,' said Bob with professional contempt for the amateur. 'I thought you would have known how that is done.'

'Explain, Bob, explain. We haven't got cards, but here is a bit of note-paper, and we'll cut it in two, so that the parts will be exactly alike.'

So. Now this is the one I am to hand to you ; this is the one you are to give me back in its place' (unperceived by Tuppit, Dier deftly pricked the second piece with a pin which he held concealed between his forefinger and thumb). 'There, go ahead ; I'll shut my eyes until you are ready.'

The conjurer took the marked paper and almost immediately gave the word 'ready.' Dier gave him the second paper, and Tuppit, laughing, talked about the absurd simplicity of the trick, his astonishment that his friend should not know it, refused to believe in his ignorance, and gave him back the paper. The detective held it up between him and the light : the pin-pricks were there—the papers had been changed. He whistled softly, smiled, and emitted two clouds of smoke.

'I believe I understand it now,' he said, nodding familiarly ; 'that's how you changed the bills up there.'

Tuppit was silent.

'Well, I won't ask any questions,' the detective went on ; 'it is a family affair and to be settled on the quiet, and if the thing is genuine, it is no business of mine how it comes to be so. But that fellow who sent for me first meant mischief, although he fancied he humbugged me with his gammon about not going the entire length.'

'He did mean mischief,' said Tuppit, huskily.

'He can't manage it though. Now, what you have got to do is to let Mr Wrentham understand that if he doesn't make a clean breast of it by to-morrow, I'm down on him, and you won't have another chance of saving him.'

This information was given with good humour, but Tuppit was aware of the pleasant way Sergeant Dier had of conducting his business, and, having unconsciously betrayed himself, understood that further disguise was useless. So, looking uneasily at his pewter pot, he said :

'I suppose you mean that if he gives up everything, he won't be brought to trial.'

'It is not for me to say that. You have had dealings with the people, and ought to know what they are likely to do. Of course, if there is no charge, there will be no trial.'

There was considerable significance in the smile and nod which accompanied the words, and it was clear to Tuppit that Sergeant Dier was now in the confidence of Mr Shield and Mr Beecham.

'I have written on a bit of paper that I want him to meet me as soon as he can. He knows the place, and if he refuses to make things square after all the mercy that has been shown him, I will have nothing more to do with him.'

'That's right, Bob ; and you may give him a hint that if he tries to bolt, or to play any pranks with us, he'll be in limbo in less than no time, and if I am not mistaken, it will mean fifteen years at least.'

Bob Tuppit hung his head dejectedly, muttering to himself : 'What will become of the poor kid and the helpless little woman who thinks him such a pink of perfection.'

The detective slapped him encouragingly on the shoulder.

'Cheer up, Bob ; you're the right sort, and I'll help you if I can. Off with you to your meeting-place. Wrentham is no fool and will see that the game is up . . . But, I say'—detaining him

—'you will tell me some day how you managed to get the right bit of paper ?'

'Yes, yes, some day—when no harm can come of it.'

The anxious and affectionate brother of the swindler got on to the top of an omnibus and smoked moodily, his reflections being to this effect : 'I suppose it's in our natures. I took to juggling in an honest way, and he took to juggling the other way. Ah, education was the ruin of him—Dad said it would be as soon as he saw what a beautiful hand Martin wrote. Lucky he's in his grave ; this business would have cut him up awful.'

At Camberwell Green Tuppit left the omnibus and trudged moodily up to the *Masons' Arms*, a comfortable-looking old-fashioned inn, which had once been a favourite halting-place of travellers between London and the village of Dulwich, the town of Croydon, and other places in Surrey. It had also been a summer resort of Cockneys in the days when there were meadows and dairy-farms in the neighbourhood of the Green. Although the fields were now covered with houses forming long yellow rows with gaudy gin palaces lifting their heads on the most prominent sites, the *Masons' Arms* retained most of its ancient characteristics and the survivors of its ancient customers.

The stout white post with its faded swinging signboard, stood boldly out at the kerb, having at its base a long horse-trough, with a constant supply of water. The lower part of the building was cased in wood which had been painted oak colour and varnished, but the gloss had been long since rubbed off. The lower windows with their small panes of glass stretched from wall to wall, but from top to bottom they measured little more than three feet. Above was a broad balcony set in a rustic framework and railing. A huge earthen flower-pot stood at each end, while tables and benches were conveniently placed round about.

Tuppit did not enter the house ; he walked up and down, disconsolately watching every approaching vehicle in expectation of seeing his brother alight from it. He had to wait long ; but he was a patient little man, and the business he had in hand was too grave for him to think of quitting his post so long as there was a shred of hope that Wrentham would be wise for once and keep the appointment.

It was somewhat late in the afternoon when he came walking leisurely up from the Green as if he had no reason for haste. Tuppit led the way into the inn, nodded to the burly landlord as he passed the bar, ascended a narrow staircase and entered the room behind the balcony.

Wrentham at first affected an air of indifference, but the affection was instantly laid aside when his brother sharply repeated the detective's warning and told him that the forged bill was in the hands of those who would make prompt use of it if he did not repay their generosity by a frank revelation of the schemes by which he had ruined Philip Hadleigh.

They were interrupted by the entrance of a little old man who was mumbling complainingly that he must and would have his beer and his pipe before he went home. This was spoken to a modestly dressed young woman who was gently

remonstrating with him. The old man shuffled across the floor to a seat. Tuppit opened the door of the balcony quickly and went out with his brother. In the dusk they could not be observed from the street. Wrentham had not quite closed the door when he followed his brother. There was more hurried conversation and argument on Tuppit's part.

'What is it they want me to do?' asked Wrentham sullenly.

'This is it,' answered Tuppit eagerly. 'The real bill was given to me for your child's and wife's sake on the appeal of Mr Philip—Coutte Hadleigh would have sent you to penal servitude. The first thing you have to do is to let Mr Philip know that your insinuations about Miss Heathcote were made for the purpose of distracting his mind from the business, so that you might be free to play your own game.'

'Well?'

'The next thing is, that as you have been dealing with firms whose clerks have given you invoices for double the amounts you paid them, you have to refund the money.'

Wrentham with elbows on his knees rested his brow on his hands.

'I didn't say anything about Madge Heathcote that wasn't true.'

'But you hinted a great deal that wasn't true, and you must own up to your purpose for doing it, or as I live, I shall bear witness against you myself.'

The young woman and the old man quitted the *Masons' Arms*. That same evening Pansy Culver arrived unexpectedly at Willowmere.

FALSE DAUPHINS.

WHETHER the boy who died in the arms of M. Lasne, and whose body was wrapped in a sheet, put into a deal coffin, and buried in the cemetery of St-Marguerite, was a poor waif of Paris, or the lad who cleaned the shoes of his jailer's wife and should have been Louis XVII. of France, is, judicial judgments notwithstanding, a question never likely to be satisfactorily settled. Those who have taken the most pains to elucidate the mystery agree to differ in their conclusions; M. de Beauchesne being certain that the Dauphin* was done to death in the Temple; M. Louis Blanc as strongly inclining to the opinion that he was rescued from durance. The wish being father to the thought, many royalists believed that the Prince had escaped his enemies, and would some day claim his own; and pretenders, as a natural consequence, have never been wanting.

The first of the sham Dauphins appeared in the days of the Consulate, in the person of Jean Marie Hervagault, a tailor by trade, who contrived to make some at least among the adherents of the ancient monarchy believe in himself and his pretensions. Notable for her enthusiastic

espousal of his cause was Madame de Recamour. She lodged the impostor right royally at her mansion at Vitry-la-Française, and gloried in seeing her husband do a lackey's duties for her protégé. Balls, concerts, and fêtes followed hard upon each other in honour of 'Mon Prince,' until Fouché intervened, and the ambitious tailor was condemned to four years' imprisonment; finding his way, eventually, not to the throne of his supposititious sire, but to the Hospital for Incurables at Biètêtre, to die there in 1812.

In 1817, the *Gentleman's Magazine* informed its readers that on the 17th of September, a young man who called himself Louis XVII. had been apprehended at Rouen. Some twenty years before, he had presented himself to a lady of La Vendée as the orphan child of a noble family of the name of Desin. She took him in; but five months later, sent him about his business for some flagrant misconduct; and never saw him again until confronted with him at Rouen. This was Mathurin Brunneau, the son of a shoemaker of Vezins, Maine-et-Loire; who, having learned all that Madame Simon knew of the lost Louis, went about the country proclaiming himself the only lawful king of France, until his profitable peregrinations were stopped by his arrest and that of four or five of his deluded friends. In the following February, Brunneau was arraigned at Rouen, and behaved in a most unprincely fashion; challenging the president of the court to fight, and calling that dignitary a beast; his many insolent exclamations and observations being 'couched in ungrammatical language and most vulgar terms.' He was pronounced guilty of vagabondage; of publicly assuming royal titles; of fraudulently obtaining deeds, clothes, and considerable sums of money from divers persons; and finally, of insulting the members of a public tribunal in the exercise of their functions. For these offences, Brunneau was sentenced to pay a fine of three thousand francs and three-fourths of the costs of the inquiry, and condemned besides to suffer seven years' imprisonment—two of the seven being given him expressly for outraging the court—his person to be at the disposal of the government when the sentence had expired. 'I am none the less what I am,' was the only comment of the cobbler-prince. Of his accomplices, one only was punished, by being mulcted in a fourth of the costs of the trial and sent to durance for a couple of months. Brunneau served his term, and was then set at liberty, only to die soon afterwards.

While Brunneau's trial was yet in progress, a well-dressed man, of tall stature and goodly mien, walked into the Tuilleries, followed the servants who were carrying in the king's dinner, and reached the dining-hall before his uninvited presence was discovered. He said he was Charles de Navarre, and insisted upon seeing the king. His desire was not gratified. He was handed over to the police, recognised as the mad nephew of an exchange broker, and relegated to Charenton for the remainder of his days.

Fifteen years later, one Richemont, a baron of

* The eldest son of a French king was termed the Dauphin.

his own creation, was found guilty of having, by a resolution concerted and decided between two or more persons unknown, formed a plan for destroying the government and fomenting civil war. For this he was sentenced to a term of imprisonment; but his real offence lay in putting himself forward as a claimant of the throne, as the legitimate representative of the elder branch of the Bourbon family. Richemont managed to get out of prison and out of France too. He soon, however, returned to his native land, and lived there unmolested long enough to see the second Empire established. In 1853, he died at the house of the Countess d'Apchier, wife of a whilom page at the court of Louis XVI. All the papers he left behind him were seized by the authorities and sealed up. Determined his claims should not be abrogated by death, the pseudo-Dauphin's friends inscribed on his tombstone: 'Here lies LOUIS CHARLES DE FRANCE, born at Versailles, March 27, 1785. Died at Gleizé, August 10, 1853'—an inscription erased five years afterwards, by order of M. de Persigny, only to be replaced by the equally assertive one:

1785.

No one will say over my tomb:
'Poor LOUIS,
How sad was thy fate!
Pray for him!'

A gentleman bearing the name of Eleazar Williams died at Hogansburg, in the United States, in August 1858, after spending the best portion of his life in converting the Indians to Wesleyanism; the fact that he was the long-lost son of Louis XVI. being apparently unknown to any but his most intimate friends, until one of them published a book to enlighten the world on the matter. From this we learn as follows: That in the year 1795, a French family of the name of De Jourdin came to live in Albany, in the state of New York; Madame giving out that she had been a lady-in-waiting to Marie-Antoinette, a statement not belied by her appearance; while Monsieur looked and acted more like a servant than the husband of Madame, and the father of Mademoiselle Louise and Monsieur Louis, as the children of the establishment were designated. That, some little while afterwards, two Frenchmen appeared at Ticonderoga with a sickly and seemingly idiotic boy, who with his belongings—two large boxes, one of which contained a gold, a silver, and a copper coronation medal of Louis XVI.—was confided to the charge of an Indian chief known as Thomas Williams, to be brought up as one of the family. That, tumbling from a high rock into St George's Lake, made Eleazar—as he had been named—as sensible as his red-skinned brothers by adoption. That, one day a French gentleman called him *pauvre garçon*, and gave him a gold-piece. That, going to Long Meadow with one of Thomas Williams's sons, to be educated by a Congregational minister, somebody told him he must be of a higher grade of birth than the son of an Iroquois chief. That, after he became a missionary, one Colonel de Ferriere, before leaving Oneida, with several Indians, to visit Paris, obtained Eleazar's signature, thrice over, to a legal document; and that the said colonel returned to America a rich man, and was known to be in

correspondence with the royal family of France. Each and every one of the foregoing statements may be true, and yet Eleazar Williams no true prince.

Much more to the point was Eleazar's extraordinary story of making the acquaintance of the Prince de Joinville on board a steamer, and afterwards, at his request, calling upon him at his hotel; when the Prince laid a document in French and English on the table, which the missionary found to be a deed whereby Charles Louis, son of Louis XVI., solemnly abdicated the throne of France in favour of Louis-Philippe. If he would sign this, the Prince promised to stand godfather to his daughter, take his son to Paris to be educated, provide him with a princely establishment in France or America, at his choice, and transfer to him all the private property belonging to the supposed defunct Dauphin. Mr Williams was not to be tempted, and his tempter returned to France unsatisfied. Unfortunately, the Prince de Joinville emphatically declared the story to be a pure invention; and it remains as unsupported as Williams's other statement, that a gentleman in Baton Rouge wrote to him in 1848 to inform him that an aged Frenchman had upon his deathbed declared that he had assisted in the escape of the Dauphin from the Temple, and carried him off to North America, where he had been adopted by the Indians, concluding with avowing that Eleazar Williams was the man.

While that worthy was labouring at his vocation in the backwoods, a Prussian Pole, named Charles William Naundorff, weary of clockmaking, was getting into trouble by calling himself Louis XVII., for which piece of presumption a Prussian tribunal sent him to prison for three years. This was in 1822. At the expiration of a year, Naundorff was set at liberty, conditionally upon taking up his residence in the town of Crossen. In 1833, however, he appeared in Paris, and applied to the Civil Tribunal of the Seine to be recognised as Louis XVII.; an application resulting in his speedy expulsion from France, and subsequent retirement to Holland, in which country he died, on the 10th of August 1845. The official certificate of his death described him as, 'Charles Louis Bourbon, Duke of Normandy (Louis XVII.), known under the name of Charles William Naundorff, born at the château of Versailles, in France, March 27, 1785, and consequently more than sixty years old; son of his late Majesty Louis XVI., king of France, and of her Imperial and Royal Highness Marie-Antoinette, Archduchess of Austria, queen of France, who both died at Paris; husband of Jane Einert of this town.' Those responsible for his burial inscribed on his tomb: 'CHARLES LOUIS, Duke of Normandy, son of Louis XVI. and Marie-Antoinette of Austria.'

Naundorff left behind him a son, Albert, born in England, and four other children; on whose behalf, his widow, Jane Einert, in 1851, brought an action before the Tribunal of the Seine; but despite the advocacy of Jules Favre, failed in prevailing upon that court to recognise their claims.

In 1863 Albert, the English-born Naundorff, was naturalised as a Dutchman by a vote of the Dutch Chamber; and in 1874 he appealed against the

adverse decision of the Tribunal of the Seine, in a suit against the Count de Chambord, demanding that he, Captain Albert de Bourbon, of the Dutch army, should be declared the rightful representative of the royal Bourbon family. M. Favre again upheld his pretensions. He contended that the son of Louis XVI. had not died in the Temple. Inspired and paid by the Count de Montmorin and Josephine de Beauharnais, certain devoted royalists had drugged the Dauphin, placed him in a basket, and carried him into an upper room, leaving a lay-figure in his bed. Discovering that their prisoner had been spirited away, the government substituted a deaf-and-dumb child in his place, and employed a doctor to poison him; but the apothecary administering an antidote, and so frustrating the plan, a sickly lad was obtained from a hospital, and soon dying, was duly confined. 'The coffin was taken up-stairs, where the Dauphin had passed eight or ten months; the dead body was taken out and placed in a basket, and the living Louis XVII. put in the coffin. On the way to the cemetery, the Dauphin was slipped out of the coffin, and some bundles of paper slipped in.' The hero of this series of substitutions was then confided to the care of some trusty friends, and all the European courts notified of his escape; of which Barras, Hoche, Pichegru, and several other public men were also advised.

By way of supporting this extraordinary story, M. Favre made some strange assertions; namely, that shortly after Bonaparte's marriage with Josephine, the Dauphin's coffin was opened in the presence of Fouché and Savary, and found to be empty; that Josephine told the secret to the Emperor of Russia in 1814, although the Count de Provence—that is to say, Louis XVIII.—tried to buy her silence with a marshal's baton for her son Eugène; that in the secret treaty of Paris the high contracting powers stated that there was no proof of the death of Louis XVII.; and lastly, that Louis XVIII. when dying, directed M. Tronchet to examine the contents of a certain chest, which proved of such a nature that, but for the obstinacy of one member of the Council, the ministers would have proclaimed the Duke of Normandy, king of France. Of course, the Duke of Normandy was the elder Naundorff, whose life had been twice attempted, once at Prague, and once in London; and, said the advocate, 'people do not assassinate impostors, but they do assassinate kings.'

Causes are not to be won by bare assertions and smart sayings. The court pronounced the story of the twofold substitution too fantastic to be entertained; the simultaneous residence within the Temple of the child that did die, the child that would not die, and the hidden Dauphin, too unlikely to be believed; while the evidence before it placed the death of that prince beyond all doubt. The documents produced by the appellant could have been easily forged by any one conversant with the events they sought to distort; and as for the elder Naundorff's claims being admitted by many people, that went for nothing, since no sham Dauphin had ever wanted adherents. It is needless to say that Captain Albert de Bourbon was dissatisfied; but he held his peace until the death of the Count de Chambord, when he publicly protested against the succession of the

Count de Paris, and once more proclaimed himself king of France. Two months afterwards, he died at Breda.

ONE WOMAN'S HISTORY.

CHAPTER III.

A PLEASANT and novel feature of the *Palatine Hotel* is its wing or *annexe*, which consists of a long, low, semi-detached building, in which are comprised a dozen or more commodious private sitting-rooms. Each of these rooms opens by means of a French-window on to a spacious veranda, from which two steps lead down to the lawn and the shrubberies beyond. A glass-covered passage lined with shrubs and flowering plants leads from the *annexe* to the hotel proper. One of the largest of these private sitting-rooms had been engaged by our worthy vicar for himself and party.

Not many minutes had elapsed after the departure of Mr Richard Dulcimer, otherwise Mr Golightly, in search of a quiet nook where he could smoke his pipe without being observed, when Madame De Vigne stepped out through the open window on to the veranda, and sat down on a low wicker chair opposite a tiny work-table. She had rung the bell a moment before leaving the room, and Jules, the waiter, now appeared in answer to the summons.

'Madame rang?'

'I want to know at what hour the next train from Scotland is due at the station.'

Jules bowed and retired.

At this time Mora De Vigne had touched her thirtieth year. She was taller than the ordinary run of women, with a quiet, Juno-like stateliness in her every gesture and movement. She had dark-brown hair, and large, dark, luminous eyes, that to many people seemed like eyes they had seen somewhere long ago in a picture. Her complexion was still as clear and delicate as that of Clarice her sister, who was a dozen years younger; but there were lines of care about her eyes, and a touch of melancholy in the curve of her lips. In her expression there was something which told you instinctively that in years gone by she had confronted trouble and sorrow of no ordinary kind, and that if peace and quiet days were her portion now, there was that in the past which could never be forgotten.

Jules returned. 'The next train from Scotland is due at half-past seven, madame.'

'Thank you. That is all.' She looked at her watch, and then she said to herself with a little thrill: 'Two hours, and he will be here!'

Jules was still lingering, and Madame De Vigne regarded him with a little surprise.

'Pardon, but madame does not remember me?' said Jules, addressing her in French.

'No; I have no recollection of having ever seen you before I came to this place,' she answered, after regarding him attentively for a moment or two.

'Yet I remembered madame the moment I saw her again.'

She could not repress a start. 'Again! Where and when have you seen me before?'

'In Paris, during the terrible days of the Commune.'

'Ah!' was the only answer, with a little air of relief.

'It was my fate, madame, to be shot down in one of the many street fights that took place from house to house. I was carried to the hospital. The doctors said I should be a dead man in less than a week, but I am alive and here to-day. No thanks to the doctors for that, but to you, madame—to you!'

'To me!'

'You were there, madame, at the hospital to which I was taken, nursing day and night, like an angel from heaven, among the sick and wounded. You nursed me, madame, ah! so carefully, so tenderly! But for you I should have died.'

'I am very glad to see you again; but I am afraid you make far too much of any little service I was able to render you.'

'No, no, madame! Pardon. It was to you I owed my life, not to the doctors. I was but a poor soldier then, I am but a poor garçon now; I have nothing, nothing in the world to offer you but my thanks.'

'I am amply repaid by them.'

'Ah, if Jules Decroze could but show his gratitude in some other way!'

'No other way is necessary or possible. Be satisfied to know that your thanks will dwell pleasantly in my memory for a long time to come.'

She rose and held out her hand. Jules took it as if it were the hand of a queen, bent over it, touched it respectfully with his lips, placed a hand on his heart, bowed again, then turned and went away without another word. He was only a garçon, as he had remarked, but then he was a Frenchman as well.

'Poor fellow!' said Madame De Vigne as she resumed her seat and took up her embroidery. 'It is pleasant to know that there is a little gratitude left in the world; only I wish, somehow, that to-day, of all days, he had not spoken to me about a past which I so often pray that I might be able to forget. Was it not enough that the writing of that letter this morning should cause all my old wounds to bleed afresh, should call up one spectre after another which I would fain chain down for ever in the lowest dungeon of my memory! Yes, the letter is written which reveals the secret of my life—a secret unknown even to dear Clarice. What will he say, what will he do, when he has read it? I fear, and yet I hope. If I did not hope a little, I should be one of the most miserable women alive.'

She rose, opened her sunshade, and stepped down from the veranda on to the lawn. Here she paced slowly to and fro. For the time being she had that part of the grounds to herself.

'Two months ago, he asked me to marry him, and I refused, although even then I had learned to love him. But how could I say Yes with that terrible secret clinging round me like a shroud? When he was gone, and I thought I had lost him for ever, I found out how dear he was to me. Five days ago he came again and told me that his feelings were still unchanged. My heart refused to say No, and yet I dreaded to say Yes. He went away unanswered. But to-day he is coming back—to-day must decide

the happiness or misery of all my life to come.' She sighed deeply, and closing her sunshade, went slowly back to her seat in the veranda.

'He asks no questions, he seeks to know nothing of my past life. But if I were to marry him without telling him, and some day, by some strange chance, he were to learn the truth, would he not say that I had deceived him? Would not his love?— No, no; I dare not. Come what may, he must know the truth before it is too late, and then if he— O Harold, Harold! why have you taught me to love you so deeply!'

Her head drooped forward into her hands. She thought herself unseen; but her sister had entered the sitting-room unheard, and was now standing at the open window, gazing at her.

'Mora, dear, what is the matter? what is amiss? are you ill?' she asked as she crossed to her sister. Then drawing up a footstool, she sat down on it, and took one of Mora's hands in both hers.

'The matter, dear! Nothing. What should be the matter?' asked the latter with a fine assumption of indifference, but her under-lip trembled so much that she was fain to bite it.

'That is just what I want to find out,' answered Clarice. 'For the last four days there has been a change in you, that puzzles me and makes me unhappy. You scarcely speak, you scarcely eat, you shut yourself up in your room; nothing seems to interest you. Since Colonel Woodruffe was here, you have been a changed woman.'

'Colonel Woodruffe!'

'Ah, Mora dear, you can't deceive me. Since I began to love Archie, I see many things that I never used to think of before. One thing I see, and see plainly, that Colonel Woodruffe is very much in love with my sister.'

'Clarice!'

'Oh, I know quite well what I am talking about. I say again that he loves you. And, O Mora, he is so good, so kind, such a *preux chevalier* in every way, that if you could only find in your heart to love him a little in return, it would make me very, very happy!'

'Why should it make you happy, dear?'

Clarice, who was still holding one of her sister's hands, pressed it fondly to her cheek, and for a moment or two she did not speak.

'Because—because you know, darling, that when Archie and I are married, I may be compelled to leave you,' she said at last with a little break in her voice. 'And think how lonely you will be then! But if you and Colonel Woodruffe were married, I—'

Madame De Vigne did not let her finish, but turning up the fair young face, bent down her own and kissed it.

'Hush! you foolish child; you must not talk in that way,' she said. 'I had to live a lonely life for years while you were away at school, and should it ever become needful, I daresay I could do the same again.'

'It will nearly break my heart if I am compelled to leave you.'

'You must not say that, dear.'

'Do you know, Mora, as I lay awake last night, my thoughts all at once went back to that day, now so many years ago, when poor mamma lay dying—when she took your hand and placed it

on my head, and said in a voice so faint that we could scarcely hear it: "When I am gone, Mora, you must be mother and sister in one to my little Clari." You were only a girl yourself at the time, but from that day you devoted yourself to me. I lost one mother, only to find another in you!"

"Your love, darling, has repaid me a hundred-fold for everything," answered Mora while her fingers touched the young girl's hair caressingly.

"Here comes Miss Gaisford," cried Clarice, a moment later, as she started to her feet.

"Why did you stir?" said the vicar's sister. "You made such a pretty picture as I walked up from the lake, that I should like to have sketched you then and there." Then turning to Clarice, "Any news yet?" she asked.

The answer was a doleful shake of the head. "I begin to think there never will be any news again."

"Oh, but there will. Don't be in too great a hurry to begin the next chapter of your romance; enjoy the present one while it lasts."

At this moment, Nanette, Madame De Vigne's maid, put in an appearance. "Tea is served, madame," she said.

"The very thing I was longing for," remarked Miss Gaisford.

Clarice followed Nanette into the room.

"Has Colonel Woodruffe arrived yet?" asked Miss Gaisford.

"His train is due at seven-thirty."

"These are trying moments for you, my dear friend."

"I would not live the last five days over again for—well, not for a very great deal," answered Madame De Vigne as she stepped from the veranda into the room.

"Here am I, the sister of a quiet country parson," remarked Miss Gaisford to herself as she lingered behind for a moment, "who never had a love affair of my own, made a confidant in the love affairs of two other people! It's delightful—it's bewildering—it's far better than any novel. Two plots in real life working themselves out under my very eyes! My poor stories will seem dreadfully tame after this." She smiled and shook her curls, and then went in search of a cup of tea.

While this had been going on, a stranger had stepped out of the hotel and sauntered across the lawn, and sat down on the seat erstwhile occupied by Mr Dulcimer. There was nothing in his appearance calculated to draw the special attention of any one to him, and no one seemed to bestow more notice on him than they might have done on any other commonplace tourist. He was a tall, thin man, with sandy hair, and a reddish, close-cropped beard and moustache. An artist who might have scanned his features with a view to painting them, would probably have said that his eyes were too close together, and that they were deeper set in their orbits than is at all common. Their habitual expression, when he was not talking to any one, seemed to be one of listening watchfulness, as though he were continually expecting some tidings, or some strange event to happen of which he might hear the news at any moment. He was dressed in

an ordinary tourist suit, with a large, soft felt hat. He sat down on the bench, crossed his legs, and lit a cigarette.

He went on smoking for a few moments, as if in contemplative enjoyment of his cigarette. Then he extracted from his pocket a telegram in cipher, which had reached him that morning at a little country post-office some fifty miles away. The telegram was headed, "From John Smith, London, to Cornelius Santelle, Post-office, Morsby-in-the-Marsh."

The stranger proceeded to read the telegram, translating it slowly word by word.

"You will take up your quarters at the *Palatine Hotel*, Windermere, at which place you will be joined in the course of to-morrow by B. and K., who will arrive at different times by different trains."—B. and K. must mean Borovski and Korilloff.—"They will place themselves unreservedly at your disposal, their orders being to take the whole of their instructions from you. Meanwhile, you will make all needful inquiries as instructed, so that no unnecessary time may be lost. You are fully aware of the arrangements that are always made in circumstances of a similar kind."

He folded up the telegram and put it away again. "Well, here I am at the *Palatine Hotel*, and a very pretty place it is, and quiet—oh, very quiet. Perhaps before next week at this time, the good people—and they all look very good—may have something to talk about—something to wake them up a little, and stir the torpid current of their lives. Who knows?"

Although he spoke his thoughts half aloud, as men sometimes get into the habit of doing who have lived much alone, and have been debarred by circumstances from that amount of human companionship which is needful for every one's health of mind, yet any one who might have wished to overhear what he was saying, would have had to be in very close proximity to him indeed. It is not impossible that at some period of his life this man may have undergone a long term of solitary confinement, and that his habit of talking aloud to himself dated its origin and growth from that time.

Whether this Mr Santelle was an Englishman or a foreigner was a question which might well have puzzled many people, especially those individuals whose travels had never extended beyond their own insular boundaries. If his English differed by certain fine shades from that which a cultured Londoner speaks, it was certainly in no point like the English of Northumberland or Devon. Mr Santelle spoke with very slight traces of an alien accent; the difference in his case consisted chiefly in an almost imperceptible lengthening of some of the vowels, and a slightly more emphatic enunciation of certain syllables over which the native tongue glides as if they had no separate existence.

Mr Santelle flung away the end of his cigarette and drew a small memorandum book from his pocket. "What was the name of the man I was to ask for?" he said as he turned over the leaves of the book.—"Ah, here it is. Jules Decroze, waiter at the *Palatine Hotel*. Good."

He shut up the book and put it away, and then he turned his head in the direction of the main entrance to the hotel. An open carriage was

standing there containing two travellers, who were on the point of departure. There too stood Jules the waiter, superintending the arrangements. 'Yonder man looks somewhat like the one I want,' murmured Mr Santelle. 'We shall soon find out.'

He sat watching till the carriage which held the travellers drove away. Then he held up a finger in readiness to catch the eye of Jules, should the latter look his way. As if unwittingly magnetised, Jules a moment or two later turned and looked in the direction of the stranger. Then the finger beckoned him. He crossed the lawn leisurely with his napkin thrown over his arm after the manner of his class.

'A votre service, m'sieur,' he said with a little bow and a smile. He seemed instinctively to recognise that the stranger who had summoned him was not an Englishman.

'Oblige me with your name, my friend,' said Mr Santelle in French. 'When I require a person, I like to know how to ask for him.'

'My name is Jules Decroze, at monsieur's service.'

'Once on a time passing under the name of Jean Reboul, and previously to that known to the world as Pierre Lebrun.'

'How! monsieur knows'— exclaimed the little Frenchman with a gasp.

'Perfectly,' answered the other impassively. Then he rapidly made certain cabalistic signs with his fingers.

The face of Jules turned as white as the napkin on his arm.

Then still addressing him in French, the mysterious stranger said in his most impressive tones: '*The right hand of the Czar is frozen.*'

To which, after a moment or two, the blanched lips of Jules framed the response: 'But Signor Sanguinetti lives and is well.'

For an instant or two the men gazed into each other's eyes. 'It is well,' said the stranger presently. 'We understand each other.'

'Monsieur has something to say to me—some instructions to impart?' said the other obsequiously, while his knees shook under him.

'I have. Come to my room at midnight, and I will talk with you.'

'I am at the service of monsieur.'

'Till midnight, then.'

'Till midnight.'

With a low bow, Jules turned and went. Santelle watched him with a grim smile as long as he was visible, then he lit another cigarette, and sauntered down the winding path that led from the high ground of the hotel to the level of the lake.

ORKNEY FOLK-LORE.

LEGEND OF THE DWARFIE STONE.

Not the least interesting of archaeological remains in the Orkneys is the Dwarfie Stone, which has given rise to much speculation on the part of the learned. Situated in a beautiful valley among the hills in the island of Hoy, the stone cannot fail to attract the attention of the traveller, both on account of its size—some twenty-eight by fourteen feet—and its romantic situation. A close inspection of this natural curiosity puts one in

possession of the fact, that human ingenuity has been exercised to render what was originally a solid block of sandstone, a shelter for man. Whether the implements used were flint or steel, we know not; but certain it is that a chamber has been hollowed out of the stone, to which there is access through a doorway and a hole on the top.

We have no clue to the name of the architect of this strange dwelling. He probably belonged to a race long since extinct, whose history is unwritten; but that the Dwarfie Stone at various periods harboured men, who, either from necessity or a love of solitude, sought there a refuge 'far from the madding crowd,' is evidenced by the traditional tales related of its several tenants. The following legend embodies the most popular of these.

Not even the oldest inhabitant of Hoy could remember when Snorro the Dwarf took up his abode in the hollow stone in the green valley far away among the hills. Indeed, the country-folk had come to regard his appearance as coeval with his dwelling. Both were mysterious, and as like as not, the first might have been the originator of the second. It was whispered that Snorro was the son of a *troll* (Norwegian fairy), hence his more than human longevity; but that his mother was of mortal mould. From her he inherited certain characteristics peculiar to humanity; these were—ambition and vanity; the former being gratified by the obsequious attitude assumed by all who approached him; the latter, by the frequent contemplation of his face in a small steel mirror which he wore round his neck; for Snorro, though short of stature and distorted of form, possessed a countenance of singular beauty, and which had hitherto defied the ravages of time.

His days were spent in the gathering of simples, from which he distilled medicines; and the study of a huge tome inscribed with ancient runes; Odin's book, the country-folk called it, crossing themselves as they mentioned the great enchanter's name. But though seemingly intent on the prosecution of his calling as a vendor of drugs and philters, the Dwarf's main object in seeking an asylum in such a remote place, was its proximity to the Wart Hill of Hoy, where he had reason to believe the magic carbuncle was to be found. The properties of this famed gem were various. Health, wealth, and happiness, every good thing that heart could desire, became the possession of the holder of the talisman. He had but to wish, and on the instant, that which he coveted was within his grasp. Only at stated times and seasons, and under certain conditions, did the carbuncle show itself, changeful of hue as the rainbow, and seemingly as difficult of access. Many had risked life and limb to obtain it, but hitherto unsuccessfully; for like the *ignis fatuus*, it eluded all pursuit.

The Dwarf alone cherished the hope of acquiring the gem, being content in the meantime to earn his livelihood by the sale of medicines and love-potions. His constant companion and assistant in all his pursuits was a gray-headed raven. This

bird of ill-omen was as much feared as his master, who exercised unlimited control over the islanders, settling their disputes, ordering their households, but altogether behaving in a manner more calculated to earn their dislike than win their confidence.

Orkney was at this period (1120 A.D.) governed by two earls, Paul and Harold. They were half-brothers, and totally dissimilar in appearance and character. Paul, the elder—surnamed the Silent on account of his taciturnity—was tall and handsome, dark-haired and dark-eyed, excelled in all knightly exercises, and charmed both his equals and inferiors by his gentle, affable manners. Harold, the younger, was, on the contrary, as fluent of speech as his brother was taciturn; and his admiring subjects had therefore bestowed upon him the title of the 'Orator.' He was fair-haired and blue-eyed; but though a well-looking man enough, he possessed neither the gallant bearing nor the winning manner of his elder brother. Truth to say, Harold was quick-tempered and quarrelsome, brooking no control, and jealous to a degree of Paul, who was loved by all classes. This unamiable sentiment on the part of the younger brother, produced a coldness between the earls which time rather increased than diminished.

In the summer of 1120, Harold visited Scotland, where he had large estates, returning to Orkney in the autumn, carrying with him the Countess Helga, his mother; Fraukirk, her sister, a widow; and many other distinguished guests, conspicuous amongst whom was the beautiful Lady Morna, daughter of an Irish earl. This fair lady, whom he had met at the court of the Scottish king, had taken the Orator's heart by storm. That she received his homage with marked coldness, only increased his ardour; and fearful of a rival coming between him and the prize he had set his heart on winning, the young earl had, after much persuasion, induced the noble Irish maiden to visit his court, where he feared no rival. But in this he reckoned falsely; for ere many days had passed, it was plainly to be seen that Earl Paul and the lovely stranger were mutually attracted, and he who had formerly avoided the society of the gentler sex, now devoted all his time and attention to his brother's beautiful guest.

Harold was furious at this unexpected blow to his hopes, and having encountered his rival one day, alone and unarmed, he drew upon him, declaring if he did not relinquish then and there all pretensions to the lady's hand, he should run him through the body. Undismayed at the threat, Paul answered firmly, that he declined to forfeit his chance of winning Morna, though that chance appeared small when compared with his brother's—he whose persuasive speech was so much more acceptable to women than his own deplorable taciturnity. Mollified by the Silent earl's modest opinion of himself, the jealous lover sheathed his sword, and grasping his brother's hand, begged pardon for his petulance, which being readily granted, the rivals parted friends.

The court of the earls was at this time held in the ancient town of Kirkwall; but as Yuletide drew near, Paul took his departure to his palace in Orphir, distant some nine miles, to

prepare for the reception of his brother and his guests at the approaching feast of the Nativity. Before leaving Kirkwall, however, he sought an interview with Morna, which resulted in a mutual confession of their love; the lady avowing, that never until she beheld her present lover had she realised her ideal of a perfect knight; while he, kissing her many times, declared that until his eyes rested on her fair face, he had never known what it was to love. When he spoke, however, of informing his brother and stepmother of their betrothal, Morna begged him to defer doing so till Christmas-day. She should then be under her lover's protection, and the sanctity of the feast might have some effect in restraining any outburst of temper on the part of Harold. Paul agreed to this, and shortly after went to Orphir. But the lovers' conversation had been overheard by the widow Fraukirk, who played the part of eavesdropper on this occasion to confirm a suspicion she had long entertained of their attachment. This Fraukirk was handsome woman, of middle age, fascinating in manner, but crafty and unscrupulous, sticking at nothing to further her own interests or those of her favourites. She loved Harold, and hated his half-brother with a bitter hatred. He was more popular than her darling nephew; moreover, he kept him from being sole earl of Orkney; and now he had stolen away the heart of the Lady Morna. Bent on avenging Harold's wrongs, she hastened to her sister the Countess Helga, and communicated the result of the lovers' meeting. Then these two women, devoid alike of pity and remorse, resolved upon the death of the man who stood between their favourite and the lady of his choice. No suspicion must attach to Harold. They meant to work for him, without apprising him of their infamous plans; and having arranged as far as possible the details of the plot, they parted.

That very night Fraukirk started for the village of Stromness on her way to the Dwarfie Stone, with the intention of consulting Snorro on the best means of compassing Earl Paul's death. Crossing the sound next day to Hoy, she travelled alone and in disguise to the dwelling of the Dwarf, who received her joyfully; for she was an old friend and kindred spirit. But when she disclosed the object of her visit, he at first flatly refused to aid her. She knew, he said, that he only occupied his present abode on sufferance; and in the event of the discovery of his participation in any plot against Earl Paul's life, he would certainly be driven to seek another asylum, in which case he should lose all chance of securing the magic carbuncle. His visitor, however, was equal to the task of winning him over. She bribed higher and higher, until at last he was dazzled by her offers of money and rank. He should be her private secretary, have leave to come and go as he listed, and she doubted not but she might be able to procure high ferment for him at the Scottish court. The Dwarf's ambition was stirred, and without further demur he promised his assistance. He could weave a piece of cloth, he said, of unrivalled beauty, which when fashioned into a garment would cause the wearer's death in a few minutes; and he proposed providing his visitor with just such a piece to be made into a vest for Earl Paul. Fraukirk declared herself perfectly satisfied by

this proposal, and the confederates parted with the understanding, that the fatal web should be placed in the lady's hands shortly before Christmas-day.

During his wicked aunt's absence, Harold made offer of his heart and hand to Morna, pleading his cause with eloquence and passion. But when met by a refusal, he burst into a great rage, anathematised himself and the object of his affection, rushed from her presence, flung himself on his horse, and galloped madly away. Two hours' hard riding brought him to the village of Stromness, where he drew rein; and his eyes resting on the snow-capped hills of Hoy, he suddenly recollects that among those very hills dwelt a Dwarf famous for the sale of philters. Resolving to visit the wizard, and procure from him a love-potion to be administered to Morna, Harold set sail for Hoy, actually passing the craft containing his aunt, who was on her return journey. But Fraukirk's disguise defied detection, and all unconscious of her proximity, her nephew pursued his course. Arrived at Hoy, the Orator lost no time in seeking out Snorro, whom he found outside the Dwarfie Stone gazing intently at the setting sun. At his visitor's approach he looked up and saluted him gravely.

In few words the earl acquainted the wizard with the object of his visit, offering him at the same time a handful of gold pieces. The dwarf eyed the young man scrutinisingly, remarking as he took the gold: 'Blind must the maiden be, Sir Earl, who needs aught to fix her fancy on so gallant a knight.'

His visitor laughed harshly. 'A woman's fancy is harder to catch than a sunbeam,' he said. 'But hark ye, wizard! time and tide wait for no man. The philter I must have and instantly.'

Without word, Snorro entered his dwelling. Returning almost immediately, he placed a tiny phial in the Orator's hand, saying: 'Pour the contents of this into the lady's wine-cup, and ere twelve hours pass her love for you will exceed yours for her.' And waving his hand in token of dismissal, the Dwarf disappeared into his com-
fortless abode.

Some days elapsed after Harold's return to Kirkwall before an opportunity presented itself to make use of the philter. But one night at supper, having secured Morna's cup, he dropped the potion into it, and filling up the cup with wine, sent it to her. His movements, however, had not escaped her notice, and suspecting treachery, she contrived, while affecting to drink the wine, to spill it on the floor. Next morning, fearing some further attempt to entangle her, she treated her would-be lover so graciously that he doubted not but what the potion had had the desired effect.

A week later, the court removed to Earl Paul's palace at Orphir. We can picture the joyful meeting of the lovers; the uneasiness of Harold, whose jealousy was again aroused; and the revengeful thoughts of Fraukirk and Helga as they waited for the fatal web. It came at length, borne by the Dwarf's raven, and the two women, rejoicing in their evil work, proceeded to cut out the vest with which they hoped to effect the destruction of Earl Paul. The gift was to be presented on Christmas Eve. On the morning of that day, when they were engaged in putting

the last stitches into the garment, their bower-door opened, and Harold entered in a very ill-humour. He had lost faith in the philter; for since her return to the society of his brother, the Lady Morna had treated him but coldly; and he had come to his mother and aunt to rail at his rival.

Espying the vest, resplendent in its gold and silver tissue, he asked Fraukirk if she meant it for him. 'Nay, my son,' said his mother; 'tis a Christmas gift for thy brother Paul.'

Then Harold fell into a mighty fury. Everything was given to Paul, he cried; but this vest he should not have, and he tore it out of the wretched women's hands. Fraukirk and Helga threw themselves at his feet, crying out that there was death in the vest, and imploring him not to wear it. But he thrust them aside, assumed the coveted garment, and strode from the bower. Suddenly an appalling shriek was heard, and the inhabitants of the palace rushing simultaneously into the great hall, found Earl Harold writhing in mortal agony, and vainly endeavouring to tear off the vest, which only clung the more closely. His mother and aunt approached, but he repulsed them savagely; then turning to his brother who held him in his arms, told him to beware of them, and even as he spoke his spirit passed away.

When Paul learned the cause of his death, he swore to be avenged on the murderers. Fraukirk and Helga, however, warned of their danger, fled away into Scotland, where they had great possessions. Their death was a miserable one—they were burnt alive in their castle by a marauding viking.

The fate of Snorro is wrapt in mystery. When Earl Paul went to seek him, he found the Dwarfie Stone untenanted, nor was there any clue to the hiding-place of the recluse. It was suspected, however, that he had followed Fraukirk to Scotland, to claim that bad woman's protection. But the country-people had another tale to tell. They declared that the *trollies* had spirited the Dwarf away on account of his evil deeds. Be that as it may, he was no more seen in Orkney, and with him disappeared all hope of acquiring the magic carbuncle.

Balked of his vengeance, Paul returned to Orphir, and soon after his luckless brother's funeral, Morna and he were married. That their happiness was lasting is testified by the saying, 'As happy as Earl Paul and Countess Morna,' which was current in Orkney for many succeeding generations.

HUMOROUS DEFINITIONS.

A WITTY, humorous, or satirical definition cannot be universally acceptable, since it usually hurts somebody's susceptibilities. No man or woman delighting in a burst across country at the heels of the hounds, but would think it rank heresy to hold with Pope that hunting is nothing better than pursuing with earnestness and hazard something not worth the catching; and the novelist who says aestheticism means, 'none of the old conventionalities, no religion, very little faith, hardly any charity, and nearly all sunflowers,' has few admirers, we may be sure, among the

worshippers of bilious hues and graceless garments. Ladies ambitious of platform popularity would indignantly deny the truth of Whately's 'Woman is a creature that cannot reason, and pokes the fire from the top ;' and how angrily your golden-haired girl graduate would curl her pretty lips at hearing a young lady defined as a creature that ceases to kiss gentlemen at twelve, and begins again at twenty. Her agreeing or disagreeing regarding matrimony being justly described as a tiresome book with a very fine preface, would depend upon whether she had private reasons inclining her to venture upon Heine's 'high sea for which no compass has yet been found.'

The gentlemen who instruct the British public respecting the merits and demerits of authors, artists, and actors, cannot be expected to own Lord Beaconsfield right in saying, 'Critics are the men who have failed in literature and art.' The newspaper writer who pronounced a journalist to be a man who spent the best years of his life in conferring reputations upon others, and getting none himself, would probably demur at that by which he lives being described as 'groundless reports of things at a distance ;' and if an American, he would loudly proclaim against the *Autocrat of the Breakfast-table* defining 'interviewers' as 'creatures who invade every public man's privacy, listen at every keyhole, tamper with every guardian of secrets ; purveyors to the insatiable appetite of a public which must have a slain reputation to devour with its breakfast, as the monster of antiquity called regularly for his tribute of a spotless virgin.'

The witness who enlightened judge and jury by explaining that a bear was a person who sold what he had not got ; and a bull, a man who bought what he could not pay for, thought he said a smart thing ; but he had been partly anticipated by Bailey, who in his Dictionary tells us that to 'sell a bear' means among stock-jobbers to sell what one hath not. The worthy lexicographer lays it down that a definition is 'a short and plain description of the meaning of a word, or the essential attributes of a thing,' but does not always contrive to attain to his own ideal. For example, we do not learn much about the essential attributes of things when told that bread is the staff of life ; a bench, a seat to sit upon ; a cart, a cart to carry anything in ; that thunder is a noise well known to persons not deaf ; dreaming, an act well known ; that elves are scarecrows to frighten children ; and birch, 'well known to schoolmasters.' He defines a wheelbarrow as a barrow with one wheel, and informs us that a barrow is a wheelbarrow. Some of his definitions are instructive enough, as showing how words have departed from their original signification. Thus we find that in his time a balloon meant a football ; defalcation, merely a deduction or abating in accounts ; factory, a place beyond seas where the factors of merchants resided for the convenience of trade ; farrago, a mixture of several sorts of grain ; novelist, a newsmonger ; saucer, a little dish to hold sauce ; politician, a statesman ; and 'the people,' the whole body of persons who live in a country, instead of just that part of them happening to be of one mind with the individual using that noun of multitude.

Philosophers are rarely masters of the art of definition, their efforts that way, as often as not, tending to bewilder rather than enlighten. What a clear notion of 'common-sense' does one of these afford us by describing it as 'the immediate or instinctive response that is given in psychological language, by the automatic action of the mind ; or in other words, by the reflex action of the brain, to any question which can be answered by such a direct appeal to self-evident truth.' Still better or worse is the definition of the mysterious process called 'evolution' as a change from an indefinite incoherent homogeneity to a definite coherent heterogeneity, through continuous differentiations and integrations ; which an eminent mathematician has thus rendered for the benefit of English-speaking folk : 'Evolution is a change from a no-howish untalkable all-likeness to a some-howish and in-general talkaboutable not-at-all likeness, by continuous somethingelseifications and sticktogethers.' Putting this and that together, he who does not comprehend exactly what evolution is must be as obtuse as the playgoer who sitting out a play does not know he is witnessing 'a congeries of delineations and scenes co-ordinary into a vivid and harmonious picture of the genuine features of life.'

Impromptu definitions have often the merit of being amusing, whatever may be said as to their correctness. 'What on earth can that mean?' asked Hicks of Thackeray, pointing to the inscription over a doorway, 'Mutual Loan Office.' 'I don't know,' answered the novelist, 'unless it means that two men who have nothing agree to lend it to one another.' Said Lord Wellesley to Plunket : 'One of my aides-de-camp has written a personal narrative of his travels ; pray, what is your definition of "personal"?' 'Well, my lord,' was Plunket's reply, 'we lawyers always consider personal as opposed to real,' an explanation as suggestive as that of the London magistrate who interpreted a 'housekeeper' as meaning 'a sort of a wife.' 'Pray, my lord,' queried a gentleman of a judge, 'what is the difference between common law and equity?' 'Very little in the end,' responded his lordship : 'at common law you are done for at once ; in equity, you are not so easily disposed of. The former is a bullet which is instantaneously and charmingly effective ; the latter, an angler's hook, which plays with the victim before it kills him. Common law is prussic acid ; equity is laudanum.' An American contemplating setting a lawsuit going, his solicitor said he would undertake the matter for a contingent fee. Meeting Mr Burleigh soon afterwards, the would-be litigant asked that gentleman what a contingent fee might be. A contingent fee,' quoth Mr Burleigh, 'is this—if the lawyer loses the case, he gets nothing ; if he wins it, you get nothing.' 'Then I don't get anything, win or lose?' said his questioner. 'Well,' was the consolatory rejoinder, 'that's about the size of a contingent fee.' So Brough was not very much out in defining a lawyer as a learned gentleman who rescues your estate from your enemies and keeps it himself.

'What is a nobleman's chaplain?' inquired a legal luminary, perhaps over-fond of professing ignorance, 'A nobleman's chaplain, my lord,' said Dr Phillimore, 'is a spiritual luxury.' It

is astonishing how innocent gentlemen learned in the law are, by their own account. Addressing a matronly witness in a breach of promise case, counsel for the defence said: 'I am an old bachelor, and do not understand such things. What is courtship?' 'Looking at each other, taking hold of one another's hands, and all that kind of thing,' was the comprehensive answer.

An Ohio school-committee must have been puzzled to decide which of two candidates for a school-marmship was the better fitted for the post, the young woman who averred that 'respiration' was the perspiring of the body, or her rival, who believed 'emphasis' was the putting more distress on one word than another; definitions worthy of a place beside those achieved by the English medical student responsible for: 'Hypothesis, something that happens to a man after death'; and 'Irony, a substance found in mineral wells, which is carefully preserved in bottles, and sold by chemists as tincture of iron.' All abroad, too, was the intelligent New York 'health-officer,' who, having testified that his district was afflicted with highjinxicks, being pressed as to what he understood 'hygienics' to mean, answered: 'A bad smell arising from dirty water.'

At one of Sheridan's dinner-parties, the conversation turned upon the difficulty of satisfactorily defining 'wit.' Forgetting that he was expected to hear, see, but say nothing, Master Tom informed the company: 'Wit is that which sparkles and cuts.' 'Very good, Tom,' said his father. 'Then, as you have sparkled, you can cut!' and poor Tom had to leave his dinner unfinished. Probably a worse fate awaited the Brooklyn boy, who, called upon to explain the meaning of 'Quaker,' wrote: 'A Quaker is one of a sect who never quarrel, never get into a fight, never claw each other, and never jaw back. Pa's a Quaker; but ma isn't!' The youngsters sometimes hit upon very quaint definitions, such as: 'Ice, water that stayed out in the cold and went to sleep; dust, mud with the juice squeezed out; fan, a thing to brush warm off with; sob, when a fellow doesn't want to cry and it bursts out of itself; wakefulness, eyes all the time coming unbuttoned; chaos, a great pile of nothing and no place to put it in.'

When the French Academicians were busy with their famous Dictionary, the members of the committee were at odds as to defining *de suite* and *tout de suite*. Bois-Robert suggested that they should adjourn to a restaurant and discuss some oysters and the question together. On arriving there, Bois-Robert asked the attendant to open *de suite* six dozen oysters, and Courart chimed in with: 'And serve them to us *tout de suite*.' 'But, gentlemen,' said the woman, 'how can I open your oysters *de suite* and serve them *tout de suite*?' 'Easily enough,' answered one of the party; 'open six dozen oysters *de suite*—that is, one after another—and serve them *tout de suite*, that is, as soon as you have opened them.' His definition of the two phrases was adopted by acclamation. There is nothing like practical illustration to bring home the meaning of things. Puzzled by hearing a deal of talk about contracting and expanding the currency, an American lass asked her sweetheart: 'What is the difference, John, between contraction and expansion, and how do circumstances affect them?' John

was quite equal to the occasion. 'Well, dear,' said he, 'when we are alone we both sit on one chair, don't we?' 'Yes.'—'That's contraction. But when we hear your pa or me coming, we get on two chairs, don't we?' 'I should say we did.'—'Well, my love, that's expansion, and you see it's according to circumstances.'—'John,' said the satisfied maiden, 'we're contracting now, ain't we?'—'You're right!' said John; and then was performed an operation which a great mathematician defined as consisting 'in the approach of two curves which have the same bend as far as the points of contact.'

A NEW FUEL.

An experiment as carried on by the contractors for the Forth Bridge at their works near South Queensferry, to determine whether crude shale oil can be advantageously employed as a substitute for coal in feeding boiler furnaces, possesses no slight interest; for should the new material fulfil the expectations of its introducers, the method cannot fail to be extensively adopted in the numberless manufacturing arts, where a heating agent combining efficiency and economy with cleanliness, is a desideratum. The general principles of the method adopted and the apparatus employed will be readily understood, when it is borne in mind that the process depends on the perfect combustion of crude shale oil, vapourised in connection with superheated steam and atmospheric air. The apparatus consists mainly of a cylindrical cast-iron retort, around which two pipes are coiled spirally, one externally, the other internally, meeting each other in a burner beneath the retort. Through the external pipe oil is forced by hydraulic pressure; through the internal pipe water is similarly driven.

To start the apparatus, the retort must first be heated, which may be readily effected by a small coal fire. The water valve is then slightly opened, and the water, after traversing the pipe coiled internally around the retort, issues at the burner beneath—a powerful jet of superheated steam. The oil is then similarly admitted through its pipe, namely, that coiled externally around the retort, and vapourised, or nearly so, by the heat, reaches the burner below. Here it is caught by the superheated steam, and hurled against the convex bottom of the retort, the force of the impact breaking up into finely divided vapour any portion of the oil which the heat may not have already converted into gas. In a short time the retort and tubes become red hot, chemical action is set up, and perfect combustion of the steam, the carbon from the oil, and atmospheric air, drawn in by the partial vacuum formed, ensues. The perfect combustion and intense heat generated consumes all the products, and leaves little or no residue requiring removal. The absence of ashes or other refuse necessitating constant attendance and cleaning; and the almost entire exemption from smoke, due to the completeness of combustion, are amongst the advantages claimed by the inventors of the apparatus.

With reference to the economy of the process, it may be added that crude shale oil is almost a waste substance, for that used during the recent experiments was the residue left in the process of obtaining the oil of commerce by distillation

from the shale. In appearance the crude shale oil resembles butter, and so viscid is it, that a match, cinder, or even a red-hot poker fails to ignite it. Even in those localities where the cheapness of coal would equalise the cost of the two substances, it is yet claimed for the shale oil, that economy results from the comparatively little labour required in connection with its employment; an immense gain is moreover made in space for storing purposes; whilst a saving is effected by the decreased amount of work expended in keeping the furnace and machinery clean, heat with cleanliness being a marked characteristic of this method.

Other advantages may be briefly enumerated: Reduced bulk and weight as compared with coal, by which a saving correspondingly great is effected in carriage, often a considerable factor in the cost of the latter material. Economy resulting from the instantaneous extinction of the fire, whenever the day's work is completed; whilst the facility with which the fire can be started, and the readiness with which the apparatus can be attached to furnaces at present consuming coal, are powerful arguments in favour of this new fuel.

It is estimated that if given quantities of crude shale oil and coal be taken, equal to each other as regards heat-giving efficiency, the former will occupy less than one-fifth the bulk of the latter. So great a reduction in space set aside for fuel, would, in our large ocean-going steamers, whose coal forms upwards of one-third of their tonnage, mean an enormous addition to cargo room, and consequently to earning power. 'Of seventy stokers to handle two hundred tons per day, and put out the ashes, sixty may be left at home. Instead of two thousand tons of dead-weight in coal, the steamer may carry four hundred. In carrying and consuming large quantities of coal, the matter of ballast is a serious consideration. A hydrocarbon liquid, carried in several tanks, would be expelled therefrom to the furnaces by pumping water into the tanks, the ballast remaining nearly the same.' There can be no question that such fuel is eminently suited to fast-sailing cruisers, which may be required to remain at sea for lengthened periods, without touching at port.

In conclusion, it will readily be perceived from the foregoing brief description of the method of employing crude shale oil as a fuel, how considerable are the advantages therefrom accruing; how important is the attempt—the first it is stated that has been made in Scotland—to utilise a substance hitherto regarded as little beyond a waste product.

DO SNAKES EVER COMMIT SUICIDE?

A correspondence as to whether snakes, when irritated or tormented to desperation, will strike themselves with their own fangs and so commit suicide, has been going on for some weeks in *Nature*. The following striking story is given by an Indian correspondent, as an incident which he once witnessed:

'I was quite small,' he writes, 'but my memory of the strange occurrence is very clear and distinct. It was in the state of Illinois, when at that early day a short, thick variety of rattlesnake was very numerous, so much so, that the

state acquired an unenviable reputation in the older parts of the Union. Farmers in "breaking prairie," as the first ploughing of the prairie sod was called, would kill them by dozens in the course of a single summer. They were very venomous; but, owing to their sluggish nature and their rattle, which was always sounded before an attack, few persons were bitten by them. Moreover, there was little danger of death if proper remedies were applied at once.

'I was one day following one of the large breaking-ploughs common at that time. It was drawn by five or six yoke of oxen, and there were two men to manage the plough and the team. As we were going along, one of the men discovered a rattlesnake, as I remember about twelve or fourteen inches in length. They rarely exceeded eighteen or twenty inches, so that this one was probably about two-thirds grown. The man who first saw it was about to kill it, when the other proposed to see if it could be made to bite itself, which it was commonly reported the rattlesnake would do if angered and prevented from escaping. Accordingly, they poked the snake over into the ploughed ground, and then began teasing it with their long whips. Escape was impossible, and the snake soon became frantic at its ineffectual attempts either to injure its assailants or to get away from them. At last it turned upon itself and struck its fangs into its own body, about the middle. The poison seemed to take effect instantly. The fangs were not withdrawn at all; and if not perfectly dead within less than five minutes, it at least showed no signs of life. That it should die so quickly will not seem strange if it is borne in mind that the same bite would have killed a full-grown man in a few hours' time. The men watched it long enough to be sure that it would not be likely to move away, and then went on with their work. I trudged around with them for an hour or more, and every time we came where the snake was, I stopped and looked at it; but it never moved again. In this case, I do not remember that the snake had been injured at all. I have often heard of rattlesnakes biting themselves under such circumstances; but this was the only case that ever came under my observation.—W. R. MANLEY.'

A STORY THAT NEVER GROWS OLD.

A YOUTH and a maiden low-talking,
He eager; she, shrinking and shy;
A blush on her face as she listens,
And yet a soft tear in her eye.

Oh! sweet bloomed the red damask roses,
And sweet sang the thrush on the spray,
And bright was the glamour of sunshine
That made the world fair on that day.

But oh! not so sweet the red roses,
So sweet the bird's song from above,
So bright the gold glamour of sunshine,
As was the sweet glamour of love

That fell on that pair in the garden,
As 'mid the fair flowers they strolled;
And there, as 'twas first told in Eden,
Again was Love's tender tale told.

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